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ABSTRACT

This brochure provides an overview of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). CES is a growing network of over 1,200 schools and 20 regional support centers that promotes higher student achievement. The CES arose out of "The Study of American High Schools," led by Theodore R. Sizer, and began with 12 schools in 1984. Today, CES membership includes elementary, middle, and high schools in 39 states. The pamphlet describes the CES network and how CES centers and CES schools are connected to the national headquarters. It lists the ten common principles of CES: learning to use one's mind well; less is more, depth over coverage; goals apply to all students; personalization; student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach; demonstration of mastery; a tone of decency and trust; commitment to entire school; resources dedicated to teaching and learning; and democracy and equity. The text describes diversity in CES and discusses how CES are designed to ensure that students are recognized by their teachers and are fully supported in their academic, social, and emotional development. It details the importance of effective teaching and the need to have caring, competent, and qualified teachers. The document also offers summaries of CES programs in Massachusetts, Michigan, California, and Maine. (RJM)

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Coalition of Essential Schools

principles at work

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Measuring the Success of the Coalition of Essential Schools

A 1999-2000 Report from the CES Network

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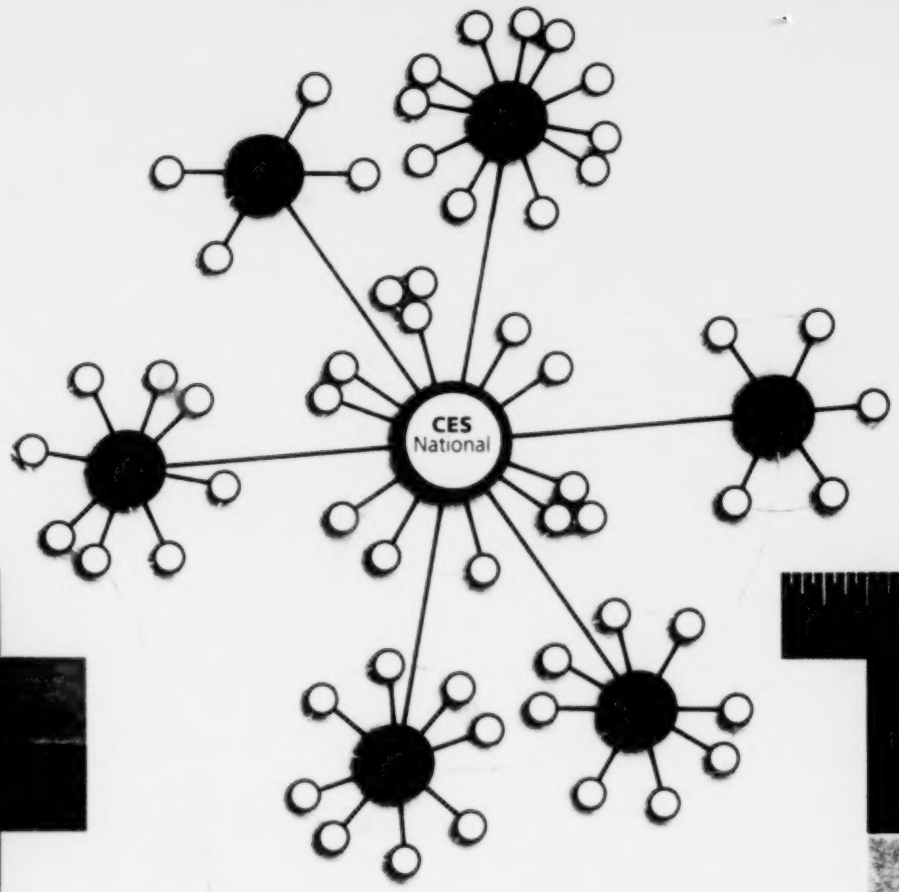
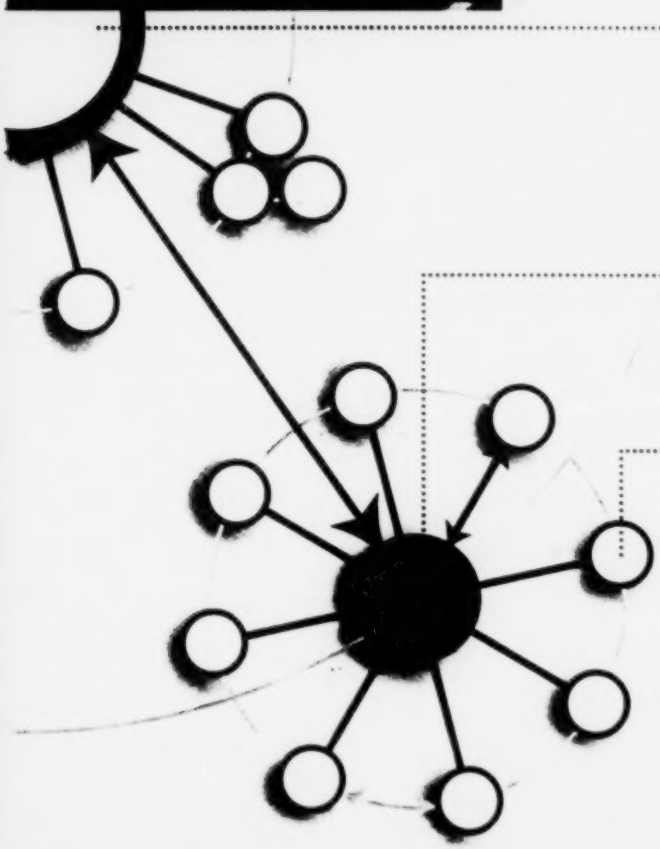
The CES Network

While the regional centers work with their local schools, CES National supports the entire network by ensuring that successes in one regional center or school are relayed and adapted in other parts of the country.





CES National

- provides educational vision and direction to the CES network
- initiates research and professional development activities
- provides resources, materials, and consulting to CES centers and schools
- promotes public engagement around issues of school reform
- facilitates shared learning across the network

CES Centers

- provide technical assistance and on-site coaching to schools
- facilitate learning among schools in their regions
- advocate for supportive policies in each school's community

CES Schools

- surpass U.S. national averages in SAT & ACT scores, college matriculation, and course requirements
- attract and retain experienced teachers and principals
- show equitable opportunities and outcomes for every student
- collaborate with other CES schools to share best practices

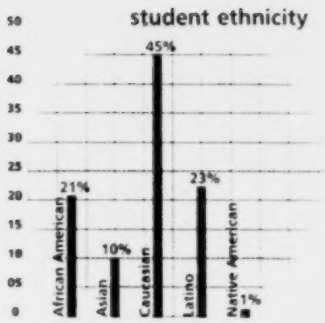
● **CES** Center

● Emerging **CES** Center

○ **CES** School

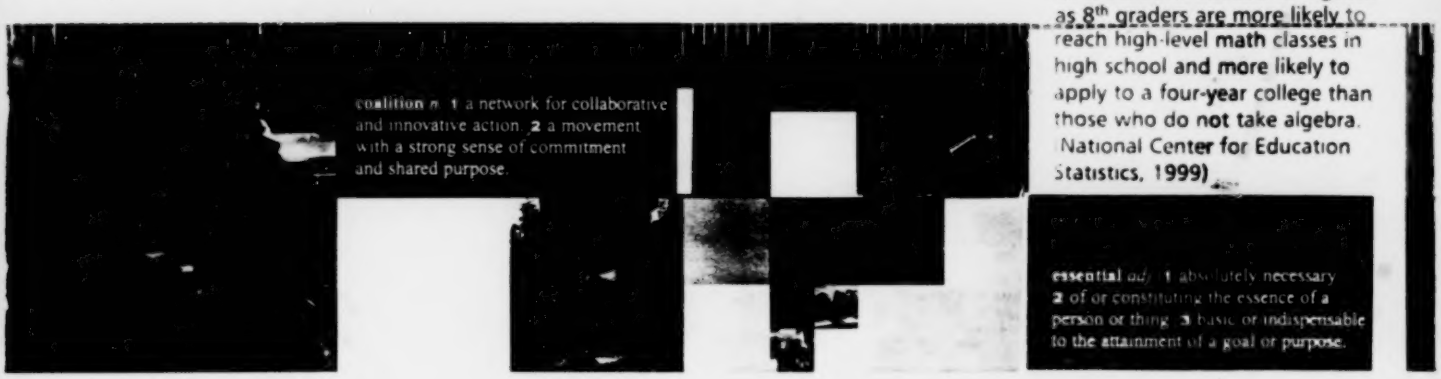
CES Diversity

Forty-nine high implementing CES schools were surveyed for *Principles at Work*. Actively putting all Ten Common Principles in practice, these schools represent 41,776 students. Thirty-seven percent qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program, and 18% speak English as a second language.



Students Achieving at High Levels

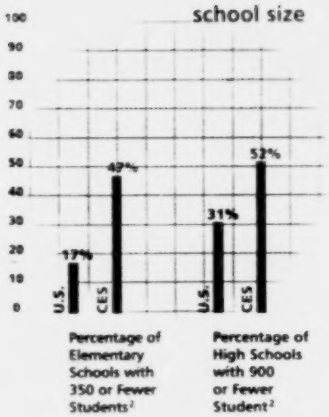
The Coalition's principle that all students "learn to use their minds well" suggests that CES students are engaged in active learning on real-world issues and are held to high intellectual standards. Required to demonstrate mastery of the academic program through multiple forms of authentic assessments including portfolio development and graduation by exhibition, CES students are pushed further than their peers. For example, while only 25% of 8th graders nationally take algebra, the average percentage of CES 8th graders taking algebra is 40[3]. Longitudinal studies demonstrate that students enrolled in algebra as 8th graders are more likely to reach high-level math classes in high school and more likely to apply to a four-year college than those who do not take algebra. (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999)


coalition *n* 1 a network for collaborative and innovative action. 2 a movement with a strong sense of commitment and shared purpose.
essential *adj* 1 absolutely necessary 2 of or constituting the essence of a person or thing 3 basic or indispensable to the attainment of a goal or purpose.

Safe Schools Focused on Learning

CES schools are designed to ensure that students are known well and fully supported in their academic, social, and emotional development. Small class sizes and manageable loads for teachers mean that CES students receive the personal attention they need to reach their full potential. And the results are striking. After joining the Coalition, schools report a 50% decrease in discipline referrals and very few incidents of violence. Per 100,000 students, CES schools report an average of 15 crime incidents each year while the nation's schools report an average of 1,000 crime incidents per 100,000 students. The U.S. Department of Education reports that "violence in schools directly affects educators and students by reducing school effectiveness and inhibiting student learning." (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998)

Structured to create smaller, more personalized learning communities, CES schools reflect the research that suggests that small schools provide better learning contexts for students on a wide variety of indicators, including academic performance, student retention, course grades, course completion, graduation rates, and parent, teacher, and student satisfaction. (Wasley et al, Small Schools Study, 2000)



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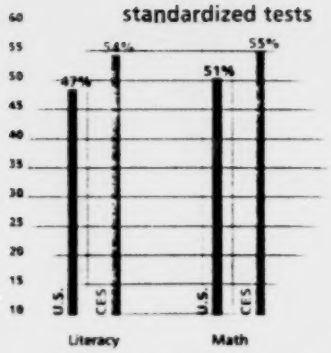
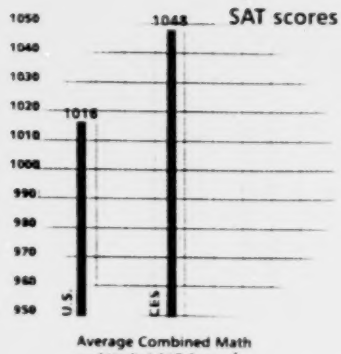
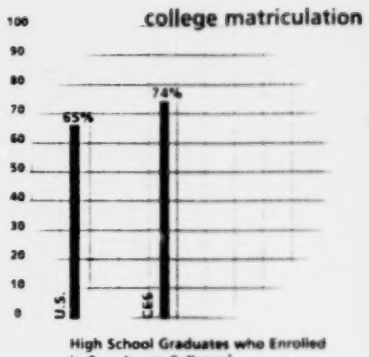


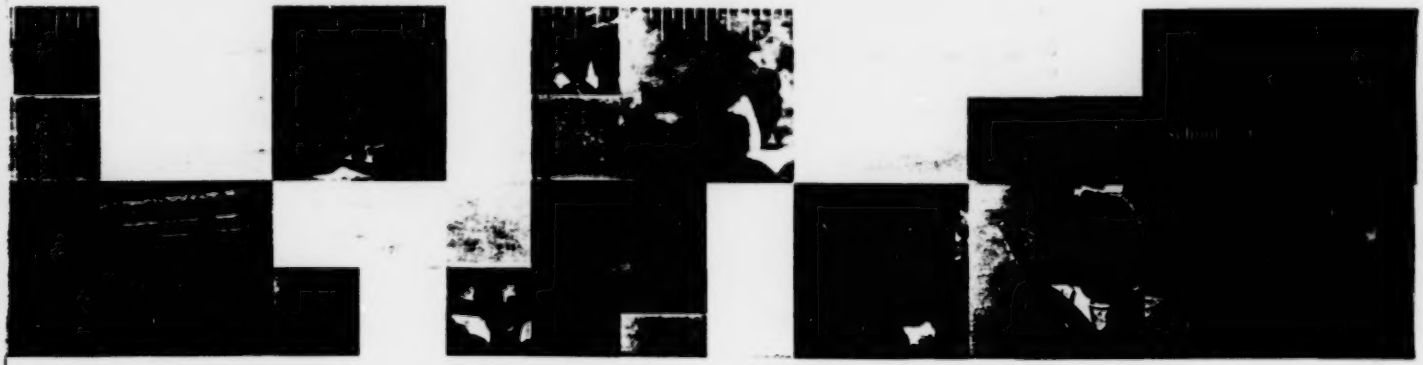
Average State, City, and District Standardized Test Scores (Stan9, TAP, CTBS, Terra Nova, etc.)



Average Combined Math and Verbal SAT Scores[2]

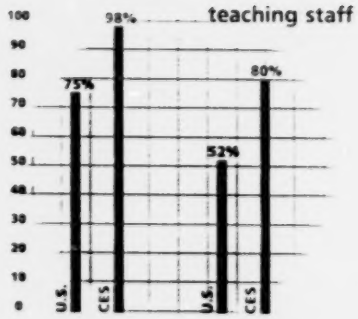


High School Graduates who Enrolled in 2 or 4-year Colleges[7]



Caring, Competent, and Qualified Teachers

Effective teaching lies at the heart of every CES school. Nationally recognized for their excellence, CES teachers actively pursue ongoing training and collegial support, conduct action research, and collaborate to develop innovative curriculum and teaching practices. When compared to their counterparts nationally, they represent an impressive teaching force prepared to assure that students achieve at the highest levels. Research confirms that teachers' academic preparation in the subject matter they teach has a powerful impact on student success as does the proportion of school staff who actually teach. (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996)



Percentage of High School Teachers with a Degree in the Subject they Teach[5]

Teachers as a Percentage of Total Staff[6]

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[1] *"Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97", NCES, 1998.*
[2] *"Common Core of Data 1995-96 School Early Release Data", Department of Education, 1996.*
[3] *National Assessment of Educational Progress, NCES, 1996.*
[4] *Digest of Education Statistics, NCES, 1998.*
[5] *"Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers", NCES, 1999.*
[6] *"Public School Student, Staff, and Graduate Counts by State, School Year 1996-97", NCES, 1998.*
[7] *"The Condition of Education", NCES, 1998.*

The Coalition of Essential Schools

(CES) is a growing network of over 1,200 schools and 20 regional support centers that promotes higher student achievement and develops more nurturing and humane school communities. Dedicated to helping all children learn to use their minds well, CES supports schools as they rethink their priorities and redesign curriculum, instruction, and assessment accordingly. CES is the nation's leading comprehensive

school reform organization, fundamentally changing the way people think about teaching and learning and transforming American education.

The Coalition arose out of *The Study of American High Schools* led by Theodore R. Sizer. It began with 12 schools in 1984 and has grown in a grassroots fashion, as teachers and community members learned about the Coalition and sought to implement its ideas. Today, CES membership includes elementary, middle, and high schools in 39 states. Ninety-seven percent of CES schools are public; 42% are urban; 31% are suburban; and 27% are rural.

What is Essential?

CES is guided by Ten Common Principles, a set of research-tested and common sense approaches to school design, leadership, curriculum, and instruction that have proven to increase student achievement. The Ten Common Principles, abbreviated below, describe the fundamental elements of successful schooling. They are intentionally designed to be adapted to the context of each school community.

The Ten Common Principles

1. **learning to use one's mind well**
2. **less is more, depth over coverage**
3. **goals apply to all students**
4. **personalization**
5. **student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach**
6. **demonstration of mastery**
7. **a tone of decency and trust**
8. **commitment to entire school**
9. **resources dedicated to teaching and learning**
10. **democracy and equity**

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CES School Snapshots

New Mission High School, Roxbury, MA

Known well and heard by their teachers, students at New Mission High School are fully engaged in the life of the school. By working closely together on school leadership and the academic program, students, teachers, and parents have been able to create a respectful school environment conducive to teaching and learning. A representative body, the School Leadership Council, makes important school-wide decisions. And it has successfully made some difficult ones such as revising the tardy policy and lengthening the school day. The value that New Mission places on students' contributions to the learning community extends to the academic program. In a bold move toward equity, New Mission redefines academic performance by formally assessing students' "commitment to learning" and by examining their "persistence", "task completion" and "willingness to push their own boundaries".

Northport Public School, Northport, MI

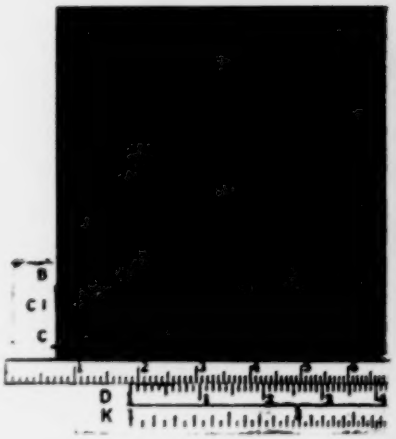
Northport Public School is a K-12 school, set in a diverse rural town on Lake Michigan. A CES member school for over ten years, Northport places a premium on having students demonstrate mastery of skills and knowledge by exhibiting their learning to the larger community. For example, kindergartners create pieces for the local museum; ninth-graders research and develop the town's historical walking tour; and seniors must present and defend a year-long independent research project before a panel of Northport residents. While the community holds students accountable to high standards, it also supports them by offering business people and community artists as resources and academic coaches. Not surprisingly, Northport students score well above other Michigan students on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP).

SF Community School, San Francisco, CA

SF Community School teachers work together to ensure the success of their students. The school's schedule gives them time to plan together for 90 minutes per week at the school's three "developmental levels," K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Teacher collaboration allows for four alternating nine-week curriculum units that incorporate interdisciplinary challenge-based projects. And the results are impressive: SF Community School students score above the national average at almost every grade level. Additionally, the passing rate on the district writing assessment jumped from 64 to 96 percent after teachers engaged in an action research project that focused on closing the writing achievement gaps between Caucasian students and Latino and African American students.

Noble High School, Berwick, ME

When Noble High School first joined the Coalition most students did not take hard courses or go on to college. But that began to change when the school examined its priorities and practices and took several courageous steps to increase the likelihood that every student would learn to think well about important things. Now each student takes four years of math and science, including advanced algebra, biology, chemistry, and physics. In any course, any student can take on a greater challenge by fulfilling stiffer requirements for an "honors" assessment. Failure is not an option: if students' coursework does not qualify as advanced, proficient, or acceptable, they receive extra support and resources until they can meet those standards. Noble's press for excellence has yielded tremendous results in the contents of student portfolios, on Maine's standardized assessments, and in the doubled percentage of Noble students who now go on to higher education.



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